

## **Governor's Committee on Aging (GCoA)**

### **Minutes from the January 19, 2007 Meeting**

Members Present: Frederick Baker, Chairperson, Mary Grosz, Ray Siver, Elaine Keepseagle, Larry Wagner, Betty Keegan, Alecia Hanson, Kelly Wentz, and Marty Heller. Amy Clark, Vice-Chairperson attended in the afternoon.

Members Absent: Mary Nester and Shirley Blake.

Presenters: Linda Wright, Sheryl Pfliger, Linda Wurtz, and Judy Tschider.

The meeting was called to order by Frederick Baker, Chairperson. The location of the meeting was moved from the Capitol to the AARP offices due to a broken water main.

Linda Wright provided the following information regarding vacant positions on the GCoA. The Governor's Office has received two applications for the Spirit Lake position. To date, there were no applications for the position vacated by Theola Stetson in the western part of the state. Contact has been made with the Regional Aging Services Program Administrator to suggest individuals who may be interested in serving on the Committee. Members knowing of individuals who may be interested in serving should encourage those individuals to complete the on-line application to be a member of the GCoA. If possible, each of the eight regions of the state should have representation on the Committee along with representation from each of the Tribal reservations.

It was noted that Amy Clark, Vice Chair, is working in the Governor's Office during the Legislative session as a liaison for the Department of Human Services and the Department of Health. Ryan Bernstein serves as legal counsel for the Governor.

Discussion was held regarding testifying, endorsing, and/or opposing bills during the Legislative session. Previous discussions with the Governor's office staff indicate that the purpose of the GCoA is not to 'rubberstamp' every issue. Members can always provide an opinion as a private citizen.

Linda Wright distributed copies and reviewed her testimony on the following:

- ❑ Senate Bill 2012 – Department of Human Services' Budget Bill: Linda also provided a hand out on proposed amendments (developed by Senator Mathern) that are to be introduced next week. Linda also provided information on the Long-Term Care Budget and encouraged Committee members to review testimony posted on the Department's website. Discussion was held regarding the increase in state match to providers, budget line item included in the Governor's Budget for the GCoA (\$20,000), assisted living, insurance, nursing home occupancy, and reimbursement of in-home care providers.

Kelly Wentz moved that the GCoA endorse the amendments developed by Senator Mathern; seconded by Betty Keegan; motion carried. Frederick Baker

will e-mail Senator Ray Holmberg, Chair of the Appropriations Committee, with a copy to Governor Hoeven and Aging Services Division.

The GCoA plans to testify/send e-mail in support of the budget line item that addresses funding for the GCoA.

- ❑ Senate Bill 2070 – Aging & Disability Resource Centers: Amy Armstrong, Project Director of the Real Choice Grant, Kermit Lidstrom, AARP, and Kathy Hogan, Cass County Social Services provided testimony in support of the bill. Bruce Murray, Protection & Advocacy (P & A), testified in opposition to wording of the bill. The Department and P & A are to work together to amend the bill and submit the proposed amendment to the Senate Human Services Committee. Kelly Wentz moved that the GCoA endorse the bill; seconded by Betty Keegan; motion carried. Frederick Baker will e-mail Senator Judy Lee, Chair of the Human Services Committee, with a copy to Governor Hoeven and Aging Services Division.

Testimony provided by Department staff can be accessed on the Department's website at: <http://www.nd.gov/humanservices/info/testimony/index.html>.

Linda Wright encouraged GCoA committee members to review documents addressing the Real Choice Grant activities on the Department of Human Services website at: <http://www.nd.gov/humanservices/info/pubs/ltccontinuum.html>. Of particular interest is a document entitled "A Summary of Studies & Reports Related to North Dakota's Aging Population and People with Disabilities".

Currently, Amy Clark is the GCoA representative on the Real Choice Grant Steering Committee. Frederick Baker is the alternate. Since both Amy and Frederick are working full-time, Frederick asked for a member of the GCoA to volunteer to serve as the representative. Larry Wagner volunteered. The next meeting of the Steering Committee is February 16, 2007, from 1 pm to 4 pm at the Comfort Inn. Amy Clark will continue to participate representing the Governor's Office.

Sheryl Pfliger distributed copies of the GCoA Work Plan (dated 1/22/03) and the North Dakota State Plan on Aging for FFY 2007-2010. Larry Wagner and Ray Siver submitted (to Amy Clark) suggestions for goals for the GCoA. Based on group discussion, the following *goals/action steps* were determined for the upcoming year.

- 1) *Initiate a joint effort with the North Dakota Long-Term Care Association (NDLTCA) to expand the availability of in-home and community-based services.*
  - a. *Invite Shelly Peterson, Director of the NDLTCA to the next meeting of the GCoA to discuss future activities that would achieve the goal.*

Frederick Baker will invite Shelly to the next GCoA meeting.

2) *The GCoA will endorse legislation that benefits older individuals and will oppose legislation that may be detrimental to older individuals .*

- a. *Members of the GCoA will attend the Friday afternoon Advocacy Group meeting to keep abreast of issues that affect older individuals.*
- b. *During the Legislative session, Aging Services Division Legislative liaison will inform members of the GCoA of committee hearings scheduled for the upcoming week that are of interest to the GCoA via e-mail. In addition to the weekly Legislative Bulletin, an e-mail will be sent each Friday afternoon around 2:30 pm if a hearing is scheduled on an issue selected by the GCoA to track and/or provide testimony, endorsement, or opposition.*
- c. *GCoA members will notify the Chairperson of their position on each respective bill/issue via e-mail. No response indicates the decision for action is to be determined by the Executive Committee.*
- d. *Based on Committee response or decision by the Executive Committee, the Chairperson will forward an e-mail endorsing/opposing legislation to the respective Legislative Committee Chairperson with a copy to the Governor and to Aging Services Division.*

Larry Wagner volunteered to assist in covering weekly legislative meetings.

Larry Wagner made a motion that based on committee response or Executive Committee decision, the Chairperson will forward an e-mail endorsing/opposing legislation to the respective Legislative Committee Chairperson with a copy to the Governor; seconded by Ray Siver; motion carried.

3) *Develop a standard format for GCoA agendas and meetings.*

- a. *GCoA members will encourage input from and attendance by older individuals/interested individuals at GCoA meetings.*
- b. *GCoA members will attend regional council on aging meetings, county council on aging meetings, and other regional events to inform older individuals of GCoA activities and obtain input on regional issues. GCoA members will track the number of events they attend and report to the GCoA Secretary for compilation for the year-end summary report.*
- c. *Individuals/groups who request and/or are invited to be presenters at a GCoA meeting will be requested forward information to be presented to committee members prior to the meeting for review and evaluation. The GCoA will follow up to finalize the date/time for the presentation.*
- d. *Agendas/minutes from the meeting will clearly state topics, positions, recommendations, and actions taken by the GCoA.*
- e. *Agendas/minutes will be forwarded to the Governor.*
- f. *Minutes from the meeting will be posted on the Aging Services Division website.*

- g. A year-end summary of GCoA activities will be forwarded to the Governor on an annual basis.*

Ray Siver moved that minutes from the GCoA be posted on the Aging Services Division website; seconded by Kelly Wentz. Motion carried.

- 4) Conduct research to determine why there is a decrease in participation at senior centers/clubs throughout the state.*
- a. GCoA members will discuss the issue with their respective Regional Aging Service Program Administrator and with older individuals at local club meetings.*
  - b. Contact the North Dakota State University (NDSU) and the University of North Dakota (UND) to solicit assistance in conducting a research project on this issue.*

Motion made by Ray Siver to contact NDSU and UND to solicit assistance in conducting a research project to determine why there is a decrease in participation at senior centers/clubs throughout the state; seconded by Kelly Wentz. Motion carried.

Ray Siver will contact the respective universities.

Judy Tschider, Aging Services Division legislative liaison was introduced. She distributed the Aging Services Division Legislative Bulletin and schedule of committee hearings for the upcoming week.

Linda Wurtz, AARP provided information on the following bills:

SB 2012 – DHS Budget: AARP believes the SPED budget should be enhanced rather than cut and that QSP pay should be increased more than what is proposed. She also distributed copies of proposed amendments (by Senator Mathern); AARP supports the amendments.

Staff from AARP met with the Governor today – he indicated that he would look into the SPED issues.

SB 1417 – Security Freeze: AARP supports this bill.

SB 1422 – Drug Utilization Review: AARP supports this bill.

SB 2324 – Homestead Tax Credit: AARP favors this bill (SB 2172 addresses a Homestead Tax Credit for disabled veterans).

The subject of background checks for volunteers was also discussed. (SB 2260 addresses criminal history record checks.)

Discussion was held regarding property tax relief for older individuals. The GCoA will remain silent on this issue.

The 2008 Governor's Forums on Aging are tentatively scheduled for May 2008. Each member should work with their respective Regional Aging Services Program Administrator regarding the forums. Amy Clark indicated that she could not serve as the GCoA lead for the upcoming forums. The Forums will be discussed at the April meeting.

Amy Clark and Frederick Baker indicated that they would like to step down from their leadership positions. Election of officers will be discussed further at the April meeting.

(Note: Staff from Aging Services Division researched previous meeting minutes and records to locate the signed/ratified copy of the "GCoA Rules of Order". A draft copy of the Rules is included as an attachment. It is recommended that the GCoA members review/discuss the draft Rules, amend if needed, and ratify the Rules.)

Alecia Hanson announced that, due to medical reasons, she is resigning from the GCoA. Her letter of resignation will be forwarded to the Governor's Office. Alecia indicated that she was willing to serve until her replacement has been named.

The next meeting is scheduled for April 11, 2007, in Bismarck.

The meeting was adjourned.

Submitted by:

Sheryl Pfliger, Recorder  
(At the request of the Frederick Baker, Chair)

Attachments:

GCoA 2007 Goals  
Draft GCoA Rules of Order